

Incident Investigation

[Scope 3](#_Toc531261949)

[Introduction 3](#_Toc531261950)

[1. Incident Type and Investigation 4](#_Toc531261951)

[2. Full Incident Investigation 5](#_Toc531261952)

[Appendix 1 Investigation Summary 7](#_Toc531261953)

[Appendix 2 Incident Investigation Report 8](#_Toc531261954)

# Scope

The purpose of this guidance is to provide further practical advice and guidance on how to investigate incidents (accident and near misses).

# Introduction

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The investigation and analysis of work related incidents forms an essential part of managing health and safety.

*‘Blaming individuals is ultimately fruitless and sustains the myth that accidents and cases of ill health are unavoidable when the opposite is true. Learning the lessons from what your investigation uncovers is at the heart of preventing incidents. Identify what is wrong and take positive steps to put it right’.*

Health and Safety Executive guidance HSG245 Investigating Accident and Incidents.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsg245.pdf>

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Catastrophic** | **Major** | **Moderate** | **Minor** | **Insignificant** | **Near Miss** |
| The most serious types of incidents resulting in:  Serious injury, permanent incapacity, loss of limb, fatality, severe damage to property, environment, long–term loss of services. | The most serious types of incidents resulting in:  Major injury, multiple injuries, long term ill health, damage to property, short-term loss of services, significant effect on property or environment. | Any incident which results in:  Fractures, sprain, strain, laceration, ill health, moderate damage to property, environment, interruption to services. | Any incident which results in:  Cut, bruise, basic first aid treatment required minor impact to services, property or environment. | Any incident which results in:  Minimal injury (no first aid needed), no repairs required, minimal impact to services, property or environment. | Any incident which results in:  No harm or damage to property or environment but had the potential to cause harm or damage. |
| Full investigation required- Investigation will be required by the Health & Safety Team (with manager’s support). | Investigation will be required by the Health & Safety Team with managers support | Investigation will be required by managers (with H&S support if required). | Manager to complete initial investigation to learn lessons and prevent reoccurrence. | Manager to complete initial investigation to learn lessons and prevent reoccurrence. | Manager to complete initial investigation to learn lessons and prevent reoccurrence. |

# Incident Type and Investigation

# Full Incident Investigation

Full investigations should be completed for major and catastrophic incidents and serious near misses. The aim of the investigation is to identify **what happened** and **why**.

It is expected that the manager of the injured person completes the investigation process. Managers may delegate investigation actions e.g. examining site of the incident, taking photographs and witness statements to other members of staff but should be involved in formulating or agreeing the action plan and approving the investigation report.

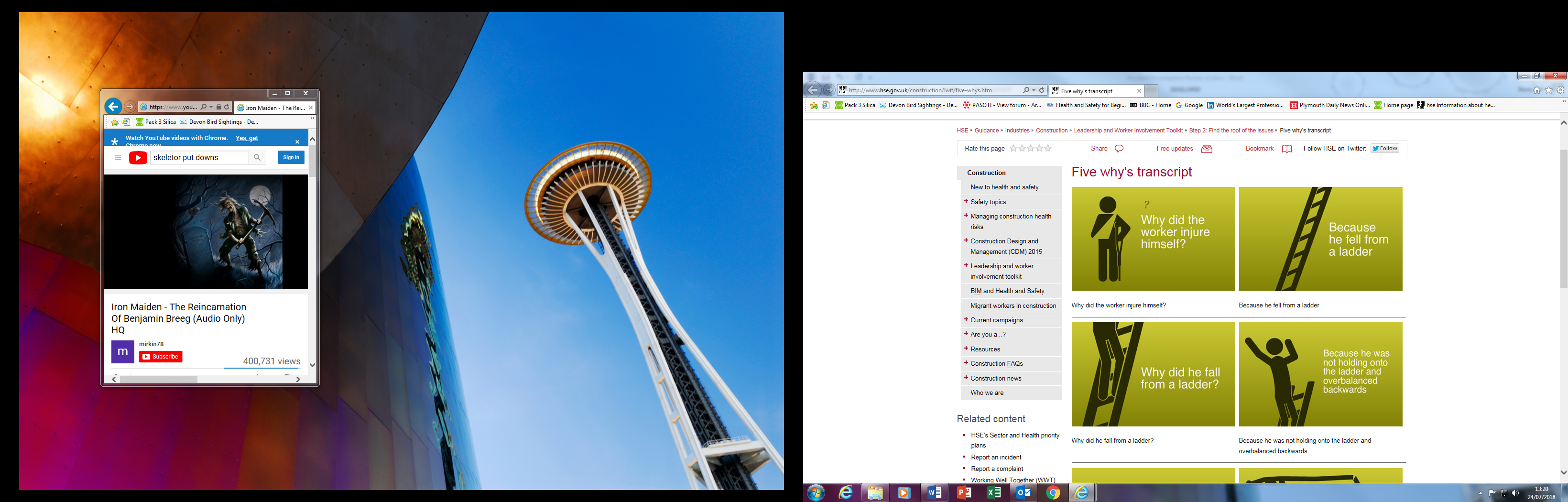
The incident investigation report has been designed to be easy to complete by staff who are not trained investigators. The form consists of a series of questions which prompt who should be spoken to and what information to gather, the form can be hand written or typed up. The finished form should be scanned (for hand written forms) and emailed to the Safety, Health and Wellbeing team ([safety@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:safety@exeter.ac.uk)).

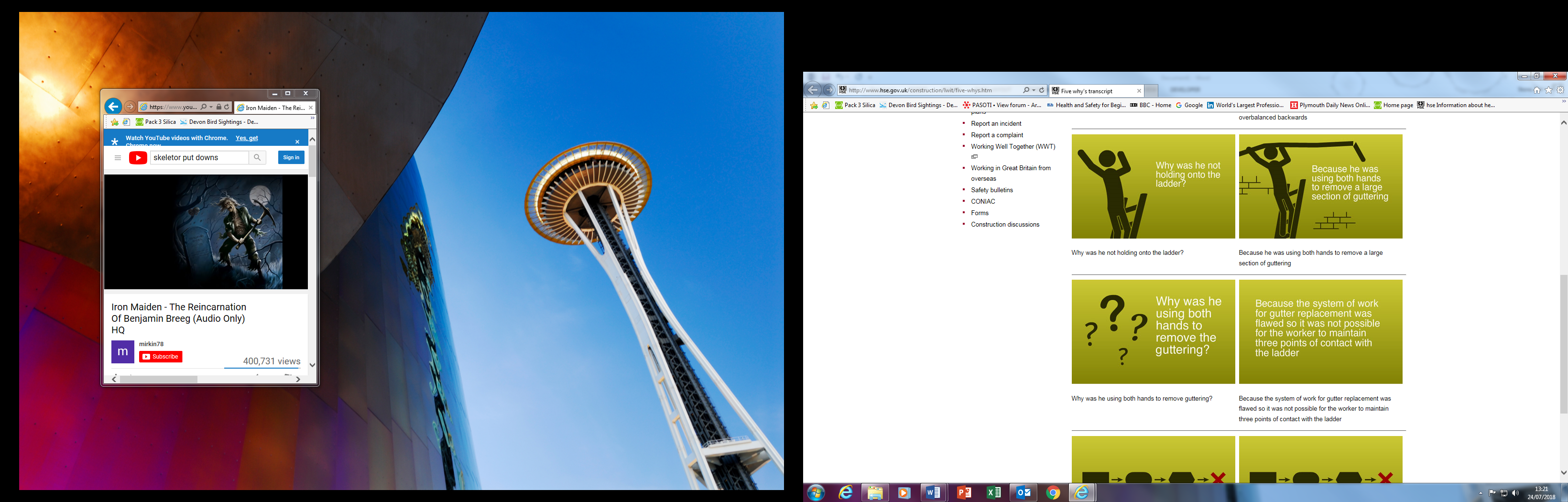
The incident investigation should identify the root cause (an initiating event or failing from which all other causes or failings arise. Root causes are generally management, planning or organisational failings) of the incident. The simplest way to identify the root cause is the “Five Why’s” approach.

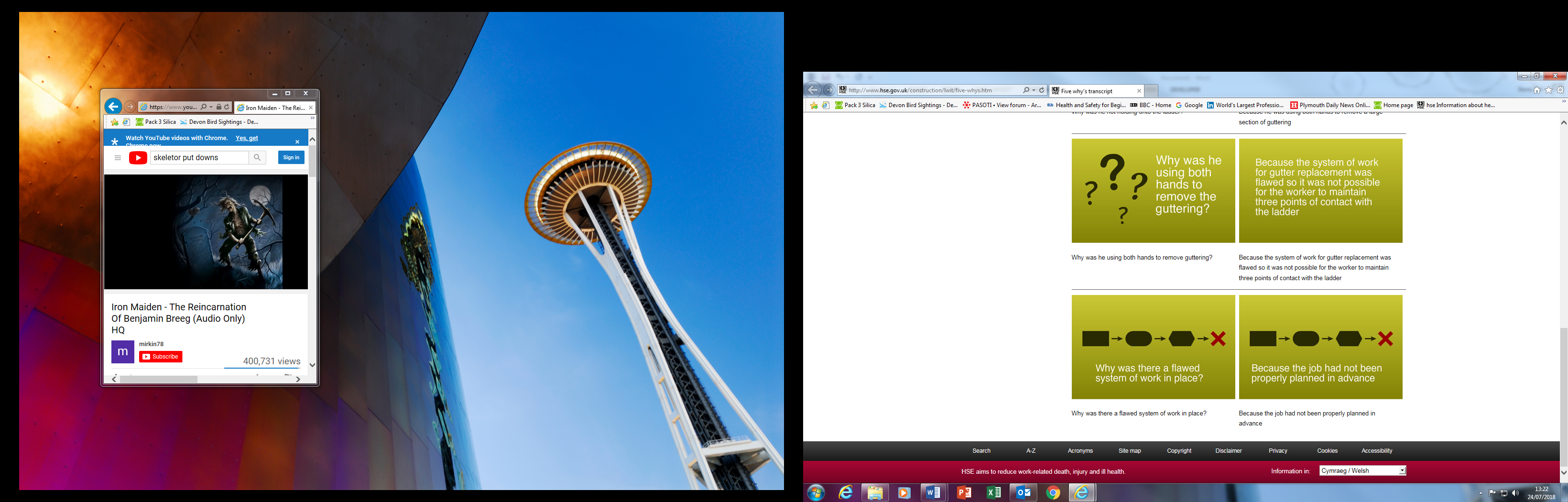
By asking ‘Why?’ up to five times, you can:

* Investigate the causes of an accident or incident;
* Identify solutions to prevent an incident happening again;
* Make links between the root causes of good or bad practice; and
* Learn good practice lessons to improve health and safety in your business.

Example Five Why Approach:







When using the “Five Why’s” analysis, try to:

* Ask proper questions that delve deeper into the issue. Simply repeating the word ‘Why?’ is not likely to help.
* Avoid being or appearing confrontational.
* Avoid making questions personal or accusatory (e.g. ask ‘Why do you think the ladder slipped?’ not ‘Why did you make the ladder slip?’

The last page of the incident investigation report is an action plan. If any remedial actions are necessary they should be captured in the action plan table. The manager accountable for the service area is responsible for co-ordinating the completion of all actions within agreed timescales and report back to their Safety Business Partner.

# Appendix 1 Investigation Summary

**Documents**

Information from relevant documents:

* Accident report form
* First aider report
* E-mail(s)
* Risk assessments
* COSHH assessments
* Manual handling assessments
* Staff training records
* Monitoring records e.g. dust/noise
* Maintenance/test results
* Previous accident reports
* Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance
* Other best practice guidance
* Minutes of meetings
* Safe operating procedures
* Manufacturer’s instructions
* Witness Statements

**People to speak to**

Information from:

* Injured person
* Direct witnesses
* First aider
* Other staff or students working in or managing the accident site

**Direct Observations**

Information from your own direct observation of the site of the accident.

Take photographs to aid observations.

* Layout of premises
* Equipment e.g. make/model/type/status/guards/power status
* Presence (or absence) of articles or substances
* General conditions and housekeeping
* Other person(s) & activities present
* Reconstruction of incident
* Measurements and plans
* Position of injured person/witnesses at time of the accident
* Presence of CCTV cameras
* Assess what you find
* Check reliability, accuracy
* Identify and resolve differences
* Identify gaps in evidence

**Do you have a clear picture of what happened and why?**

# Appendix 2 Incident Investigation Report

|  |
| --- |
| **Incident Investigation Form**  This form should be signed by the person leading the incident investigation. If you require any assistance in completing this form please contact the Safety, Health & Wellbeing Team |

### Section 1: Overview

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Injured Person(s)** |  | **Date of Incident** | |  |
| **Manager carrying out investigation** |  | **Date of Investigation** | |  |
| **Incident Severity (from HSI01 form)** | **Catastrophic** | |  | |
| **Major** | |  | |
| **Moderate** | |  | |
| **Minor** | |  | |
| **Insignificant** | |  | |
| **Near miss** | |  | |
| **Was the severity on HSI01 correct?** | Yes ☐ | | No | |
| **If no what is the actual severity of the incident?** | **Catastrophic** | |  | |
| **Major** | |  | |
| **Moderate** | |  | |
| **Minor** | |  | |
| **Insignificant** | |  | |
| **Near miss** | |  | |

### Section 2: Investigation Information Gathering

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Where and when did the incident happen?** Include building and room. For outside areas consider aerial map with site of incident marked. | | | |
| 1. **Who was injured/ suffered ill health or was otherwise involved with the incident?**   Include name, staff or student number if known, length of service, status e.g. staff, student, contractor | | | |
| 1. **Were there any witnesses to this incident?** | | | |
| Yes | No | | |
| **3.1 Have witness statements been taken?** | | | |
| Yes | No | | |
| Supporting documents included in this investigation:  ☐ witness statements - Name(s)  ☐ Other (Please state) | | | |
| 1. **How did the incident happen? (Be as detailed as possible)**   (What activities were being carried out at the time and any equipment involved including make, model, serial no) | | | |
| Supporting documents/items included in this investigation:  Photographs  CCTV or video/audio files  Plans  Physical evidence e.g. whole of damaged parts of equipment, samples of substances, clothing or footwear  ☐ Manufacturers/suppliers user guides  ☐ Results of tests e.g. dust or noise monitoring  ☐ Health surveillance records  ☐ Best practice guidance e.g. trade association or Health and Safety Executive guidance  Other (Please state) | | | |
| 1. **Why did the incident happen?** **(Use the Five Why’s technique to identify root causes)** | | | |
| 1. **Was there a risk assessment and/or safe operating procedure (SOP) for the task?** | | Yes | No |
| * 1. **Did the risk assessment/SOP cover all aspects of the task?** | | Yes | No |
| * 1. **Was it being followed?** | | Yes☐ | No ☐ |
| * 1. **Supporting documents/items** **included in this investigation :**   Risk assessment(s) e.g. COSHH, Manual Handling, LOLER  Safe operating procedures  Give Details: | | | |
| 1. **Was there anything unusual or different about the working conditions at the time of the incident?** e.g. weather, open day etc. | | | |
| Yes | No | | |
| **Give details:** | | | |
| 1. **What injuries or ill health effects, if any, were caused?** | | | |
| 1. **Was maintenance, cleaning or housekeeping sufficient?** | | | |
| Yes | No | | |
| * 1. **If not, explain why not:** | | | |
| Supporting documents/ items included in this investigation:  Maintenance Records  Other (Please state)  Cleaning records  Give Details: | | | |
| 1. **Was a lack of competency/training a factor in this incident?** | | | |
| Yes | No | | |
| * 1. **Give details:** | | | |
| Supporting documents/items included in this investigation:  Training records  Other (Please state) | | | |
| 1. **Did the workplace layout influence the incident?** | | | |
| Yes | No | | |
| * 1. **How did the workplace influence the incident?** e.g. maintenance, routine/non-routine work being completed | | | |
| 1. **Was safety equipment and/or personal protective equipment provided?** | | | |
| Yes | No | | |
| **12.1 Was the equipment suitable for the task and being used correctly?** | | | |
| Yes | No | | |
| **Give details:** | | | |
| **12.2 Was PPE used during the task?** | | | |
| Yes | No | | |
| **12.3 Was PPE compatible with other PPE used?** | | | |
| Yes | No | | |
| 1. **Are you aware of any similar incidents?** | | | |
| Yes | No | | |
| **Give details:** | | | |
| 1. **Is there any other information not detailed above that is relevant to this incident?** | | | |
| Yes | No | | |
| **Give details:** | | | |

**Section 3: Action Plan and Investigation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Description** | **Allocated to** | **Target Date** | **Comments** | **Task Complete** | | **Date**  **Completed** |
|  |  |  |  |  | Yes | No |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | Yes | No |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | Yes | No |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | Yes | No |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | Yes | No |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | Yes | No |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | Yes | No |  |